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Fathers Tolerant of Islam?

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New A.P. Bible Class Curriculum



Were the Founding Fathers "Tolerant" of Islam?

Dave Miller, Ph.D.

[**EDITOR'S NOTE:** This article is the first installment of a two-part critique of an article written by James Hutson, Library of Congress Manuscript Division Chief, on the Founding Fathers' attitude toward Islam.]

ONE prominent misconception pertaining to the liberty envisioned by the Founding Fathers of America concerns their intentions with regard to non-Christian religions. Case in point: Manuscript Division Chief of the Library of Congress, James Hutson, wrote an article, titled "The Founding Fathers and Islam" (which routinely receives sanction on Muslim Web sites and blogs [e.g., Amanullah, 2007; Shadia, 2012; "How Did the U.S...?" 2011; Pakistanis..., 2011; Nuha, 2012; The Islam Factor, 2008; Islamic News Updates, 2011]), in which he suggests that

it is clear that the Founding Fathers thought about the relationship of Islam to the new nation and were **prepared to make a place for it in the republic....** The Founders of this nation **explicitly included Islam** in their vision of the future of the republic...[and] **would have incorporated it into the fabric of American life** (2002, emp. added).

Such expressions as "prepared to make a place for it," "explicitly included," and "would have incorporated it" are ambiguous and vague at the least, and misleading at worst. They leave the impression that the Founders were pluralistic and welcomed Islam as a viable, authentic

religion that ought to receive society's **equal encouragement and acceptance** along with Christianity, further implying that other non-Christian religions, and even the irreligious and atheist, should be given the same consideration. It is disconcerting that such a prominent person in a governmental organization as influential as the Library of Congress would propagate the myth of political correctness to the detriment of the nation and the disparagement of our nation's Founders. The pervasive propaganda of political correctness has so colored the average American's perspective that it is commonplace to superimpose current conceptions back onto the Founding era. Nevertheless, the documentary evidence clearly demonstrates that the Founders did not share this "politically correct," sanitized version of history.

The Founders would not have favored integrating Islam into our schools, government, and other civil institutions. Far from it. In his discussion of freedom of religion in his monumental *Commentaries on the Constitution of the United States*, Father of American Jurisprudence Joseph Story clarified the meaning of the First Amendment with regard to the priority of Christianity:

[I]t is impossible for those, who believe in the truth of Christianity, as a divine revelation, to doubt, that **it is the especial duty of government to foster, and encourage it among all the citizens and subjects....**

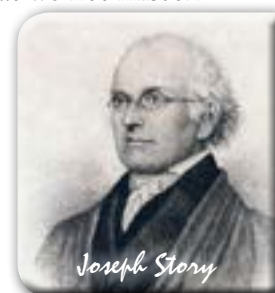
Indeed, in a republic, there would seem to be a peculiar propriety in **viewing the Christian religion, as the great basis, on which it must rest for its support and permanence**, if it be, what it has ever been deemed by its truest friends to be, **the religion of liberty**.

Probably at the time of the adoption of the constitution, and of the amendment to it, now under consideration, the general, if not the universal, sentiment in America was, that **Christianity** ought to receive encouragement from the state, so far as was not incompatible with the private rights of conscience, and the freedom of religious worship. **An attempt to level all religions, and to make it a matter of state policy to hold all in utter indifference**, would have created universal disapprobation, if not universal indignation (1833, 44.723-726.3.3.1865-1868, emp. added).

Indeed, the First Amendment was never intended to "level all religions" (and Islam can hardly be stylized "the religion of liberty"). Story further explained that

the real object of the [First] amendment was not to countenance, **much less to advance Mahometanism**, or Judaism, or infidelity **by prostrating Christianity**; but to exclude all rivalry among **Christian sects** and to prevent any national ecclesiastical establishment which should give to a hierarchy the exclusive patronage of the national government (1833, 3:728, emp. added).

It is imperative that we not misconstrue the Founders' strong emphasis on religious freedom and tolerance as an indication that they viewed all religion as legitimate or conducive to the principles of the Republic. Their central concern was "disestablishment," i.e., preventing the federal government from establishing one Christian sect as the state religion.

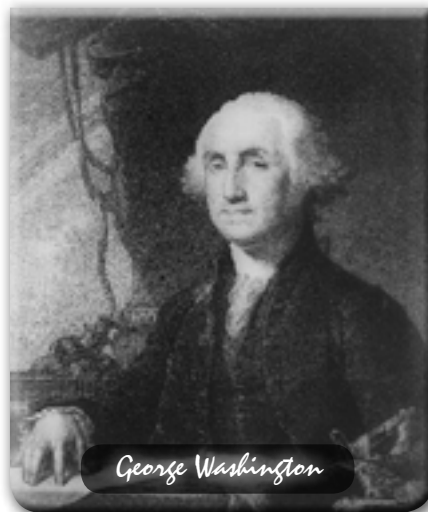


Their idea of “freedom of religion” was first and foremost freedom to pursue the **Christian** religion unhindered by the federal government, and only secondarily freedom to practice non-Christian religion. This truth is verified by the discussions surrounding the wording of the First Amendment. George Mason—who has gone down in American history as the Father of the Bill of Rights—proposed the following wording: “All men have an equal, natural and unalienable right to the free exercise of religion, according to the dictates of conscience; and that no particular sect or society of **Christians** ought to be favored or established by law in preference to others” (as quoted in Rowland, 1892, 1:244, emp. added). While Mason’s proposal did not make the final cut, it nevertheless establishes the historical context of the Founders’ discussion, demon-

strating that their concern was first and foremost for the free exercise of the **Christian** religion. Using similar terminology, Mason had previously crafted *The Virginia Declaration of*

Rights—the very document which influenced both Thomas Jefferson’s wording of the *Declaration of Independence* as well as James Madison’s draft of the Bill of Rights that was added to the federal *Constitution*. Article XVI reads:

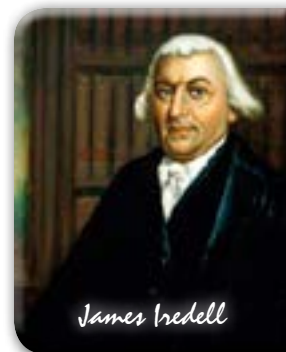
That religion, or the duty which we owe to our Creator, and the manner of discharging it, can be directed only by reason and conviction, not by force or violence, and therefore all men are equally entitled to the free exercise of religion, according to the dictates of conscience; and that it is the mutual duty of all to practise **Christian** forbearance, love, and charity towards each other (Mason, 1776, emp. added).



To the Founders, “tolerance” was not to be equated with approval or agreement, let alone encouragement that would imply an equal place should be made for non-Christian religion in government, schools, etc. The Founders were no more willing to encourage Islam than they were interested in encouraging the spread of **atheism, paganism, or Native American religion**. [NOTE: Atheists, though few in number at the time in America, were not allowed to serve as witnesses in court—see Story, 1851, 2:8-9; Swift, 1796, 2:238.] For example, the Father of our country, George Washington, delivered a speech to the Delaware Indian chiefs on May

12, 1779: “You do well to wish to learn our arts and ways of life, and **above all, the religion of Jesus Christ**. These will make you a greater and happier people than you are. **Congress will do everything they can to assist you in this wise intention**” (15:55, emp. added). Far from encouraging the superstitious idolatry of much of Native American religion, the Founders (including the Congress!) urged Indians to convert to Christianity. The same may be said for all other non-Christian ideologies—including the inherently godless economic philosophies of socialism, Marxism, fascism, and atheistic communism. Indeed, their words and actions denigrate such thought systems. They believed that non-Christian philosophies and religions were **false** and ultimately detrimental to genuine liberty.

James Iredell, a U.S. Supreme Court judge appointed by George Washington, articulated this point succinctly in 1788



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in the debates on the wording of the *Constitution*:

But it is objected that the people of America may perhaps choose representatives who have no religion at all, and that pagans and **Mahometans** may be admitted into offices.... **But it is never to be supposed that the people of America will trust their dearest rights to persons who have no religion at all, or a religion materially different from their own** (Elliot, 1836, 4:194, emp. added).

Samuel Johnston, governor of North Carolina and member of the *Constitution* ratifying convention in 1788, likewise felt confident that Muslims should not, and hopefully would not, be allowed to become mainstream in American politics and public institutions—except in only two cases:

It is apprehended that Jews, **Mahometans**, pagans, &c., may be elected to high offices under the government of the United States. Those who are **Mahometans**, or any others who are not professors of the Christian religion, can never be elected to the office of President or other high office, but in one of two cases. **First, if the people of America lay aside the Christian religion altogether,** it may happen.

Should this unfortunately take place, the people will choose such men as think as they do themselves. Another case is, if any persons of such descrip-

tions should, notwithstanding their religion, acquire the confidence and esteem of the people of America **by their good conduct and practice of virtue,** they may be chosen. I leave it to gentlemen's candor to judge what probability there is of the people's choosing men of different sentiments



from themselves (Elliot, 4:198-199, emp. added).

Constitution signer Richard Dobbs Spaight echoed the same prevailing sentiment:

As to the subject of religion...[n]o power is given to the general government to interfere with it at all.... No [Christian—DM] sect is preferred to another. Every man has a right to worship the Supreme Being in the manner he thinks proper. No test is required. All men of equal capacity and integrity are equally eligible to offices.... **I do not suppose an infidel, or any such person, will ever be chosen to any office unless the people themselves be of the same opinion** (Elliot, 1836, 4:208, emp. added).

Implicit in all three of these Founders' observations is the fact that Christianity was the underlying belief system on which the Republic was poised. The Founders were unanimous in their desire that the *Constitution* provide no pretext for governmental interference in the free exercise of the Christian religion by the citizenry. So the only way that atheism or Islam could ever make headway in America's social and civil institutions is **if the people themselves abandon their Christian values.** Tragically, their words were prophetic.

WHAT THEY MEANT BY "RELIGIOUS FREEDOM"

THE Founders' idea of religious freedom was actually quite simple and

sensible—in contrast with the self-contradictory and inconsistent view of today's vacuous notions of tolerance and political correctness. The facts show that the mass of the Founders, with few exceptions, believed that the Christian worldview and Christian principles must be the foundation of the Republic (see, for example, the 15 proclamations issued by the Continental Congress from 1775 to 1783 in Miller, 2009). Consequently, their view of religious freedom and tolerance amounted essentially to **the prevention of religious persecution.** Those who practiced no religion or a non-Christian religion could come to America and **not be persecuted** for the simple reason that the bulk of the Founders and the mass of American citizens embraced **Christian** principles that forbid persecuting one's fellowman (e.g., Matthew 5:38-47; Luke 6:27-36).

The Founders had felt the sting of persecution in their disagreement with the state religion (i.e., the Church of England). They were well familiar with their mother country's long history of religious oppression, depending on whether a Catholic or a Protestant monarch was on the throne. The Founders' "forefathers" were the pilgrims who fled England specifically on account of religious persecution. Hence, the Founders and Framers wanted the new Republic to dispense with such coercion—in complete harmony with the nature of God Himself, who created humans to be freewill agents who make their own decisions with regard to their eternal destiny. Further, because the Founders had grown up in an environment that promulgated Christian principles, they understood and embraced Jesus' admonition to treat others the way they themselves wished to be treated (Matthew 7:12). Thomas Jefferson's query posed to the ambassador of Tripoli reflects this principle: "We took the liberty to make some inquiries concerning the grounds of their pretensions to make war upon nations **who had done them no injury,** and observed that **we considered all mankind as our Friends who had**

(cont. on p. 32)



More Conflicting Evidence Regarding the Alleged Age of the Grand Canyon

Jeff Miller, Ph.D.

Evolutionary geologists have argued about the age of the Grand Canyon for decades. In recent years, scientists have changed their tune from claiming that “40 million years were required for the Grand Canyon to be eroded” (Hoffman, 1987, p. 11), to a “prevailing view” that the canyon’s carving “occurred after 5 to 6 million years ago” (Flowers and Farley, 2012, 338[6114]:1616). Some have still contended that the canyon is as old as 17 million years (Perkins, 2012), and other evolutionary geologists have come to the conclusion that the Grand Canyon was not even carved over a long period of time at all, but rather, catastrophically—growing “in quick, violent spurts from massive flooding of the Colorado River” (“Baby Grand,” 2003, p. 7)—a contention closer to what creationists have long espoused. Recent research by geologists from the University of Colorado at Boulder and the California Institute of Technology (Flowers and Farley) indicates that newer dating techniques yield age estimates much higher.

Science magazine reports that:

The pattern of helium concentrations in the samples suggests that substantial parts of the western portion of the Grand Canyon were already carved to within a few hundred meters of their current depth by about **70 million years ago**.... That’s a far cry from the 5-million-to 6-million-year-old age suggested by previous research, and is about **quadruple** the oldest previous estimate from other teams for the canyon’s age (Perkins, emp. added).

Quite an abrupt change, to say the least. And many geologists are skeptical. Geologist Richard Young of the State University of New York, Geneseo said, “I like the work [this team is] doing, and a lot of the stuff they’ve done is really interesting, but there’s a lot of evidence for a young Grand Canyon” (as quoted in Perkins). Professor emeritus of geosciences at the University of Arizona in Tucson said, “this [notion of an old Grand Canyon] isn’t what most people are thinking.... The Grand Canyon is a very young-looking feature to this geologist’s eye” (as quoted in Perkins). Structural geologist of the University of New Mexico in Albuquerque thinks the new findings are “out in left field,” seeing as his team of researchers “also analyzed helium concentrations in apatites that were collected just a couple of kilometers downstream from where Flowers and Farley collected their samples in the western Grand Canyon” (Perkins). Their results, which will be published in the coming months, “bolster the notion of a young gorge [i.e., fewer than 20 million years old—JM]” (Perkins).

What are we to make of this clearly controversial discussion? First, as usual, evolutionists cannot even agree with each other over their assertions, and yet we are supposed to blindly believe them.

Geologist Rebecca Flowers of the University of Colorado at Boulder, lead author of this new research, herself admits that, “If history were as simple as the popular view, the canyon’s origins wouldn’t continue to be a **topic of hot debate**” (as quoted in Perkins, emp. added). If the alleged evidence prompting the previous “prevailing” timeline—a timeline that had been touted as fact by most geologists for decades—is, in truth, questionable enough to potentially call for its being brushed aside due to the latest evidence, how can it be said that the evidence for the previous timeline was as substantial as had been asserted? Who’s to say that this **new** evidence is not also questionable, in spite of the claims of today’s geologists?

Second, evolutionary dating techniques continue to prove themselves to be suspect, since they yield completely different age results for the same specimen (in this case, a canyon), often differing by millions and millions of years. This problem, as we have discussed elsewhere (i.e., Miller, 2013), is likely due to the inherent flaws in the assumptions being utilized in evolutionary dating techniques, and is further evidence to substantiate that truth. Once again, viewing the geologic column through the lense of catastrophism (especially in light of the global Flood of Noah’s day) eliminates the continuing contradictions implied by this latest find. [NOTE: For previous articles documenting fluctuating alleged ages for the Grand Canyon, see: Butt, 2003; Butt, 2008.]

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done us no wrong, nor had given us any provocation” (“Letter from the...,” 1786, emp. added). To the Founders, permitting non-Christian peoples to live in our country without persecution was not tantamount to “celebrating diversity” or endorsing what they considered to be false religion. Rather, doing so was first and foremost an affirmation of their desire that all peoples be allowed to pursue happiness without governmental intrusion or coercion.

TWO CRITICAL EXCEPTIONS

HOWEVER, we must hasten to emphasize that the Founders placed two important qualifications on religious tolerance. First, religious toleration extended only so far as the religion in question did not engage in a practice that is **deemed by Christian standards to be immoral**. For example, in a case that went all the way to the Pennsylvania Supreme Court in 1815, *The Commonwealth v. Sharpless*, the defendant was convicted for displaying in his home an obscene painting of a man and woman in an “indecent posture”—an offense against Christian morality (1815). Likewise, in a number of Supreme Court cases, instances of Mormon polygamy were prosecuted as violations of Christian morality—though the defense argued that the practice was justifiable on the grounds of freedom of religion (e.g., *Reynolds v. United States*, 1879; *Murphy v. Ramsey*, 1885; *Davis v. Beason*, 1890). The Founders never envisioned the First Amendment providing sanction for any behavior that is deemed by Christian standards to be immoral or “licentious.” Yet, now that Islam is making significant encroachments into American society, with its brazen advocacy of polygamy (*Surah* 4:3; cf. 4:24-25, 129; 23:6; 30:21; 70:30), the erosion of Christian morality and the appalling ignorance of the founding principles among the population will inevitably sanction such immorality under the guise of tolerance and “religious freedom.”

A second exception that clarifies the notion of religious freedom is seen in the Founders’ insistence that religious freedom did not extend to any action that would **bring physical harm to self or other citizens**. Actions like Buddhist priests setting themselves on fire in the street, or temple priestesses providing sexual services to devotees, or brothels, or businesses that peddle pornography would not have been tolerated by the Founders under the guise of “freedom of religion” (*Commonwealth v. Nesbit*, 1859). That means that Islam’s fifteen hundred yearlong historical propensity for engaging in street violence, suicide bombing, and the execution of those who refuse to submit to Allah—actions that are endemic to Islam and the Quran (e.g., *Surah* 47:4)—are not to be tolerated as protected religious practice. The number of incidents in America of Islamic “honor killings” is mounting (“Missouri Couple...,” 1991; Schoetz, 2008; Thompson, 2011; Tang, 2011; Myers, 2011; *Daily Mail*..., 2012)—a natural by-product of political correctness, a misunderstanding of the principle of religious freedom, and the loss of the average American’s commitment to Christian morality. Religious freedom notwithstanding, the Founders were wary of any infiltration of the nation’s institutions by “Mahometans” in light of their religious inclinations toward physical violence (cf. Miller, 2005).

TOLERANCE?

WITH these observations in mind, what is one to make of Hutson’s allusions to incidents in which the Founders seemingly manifested “inclusive” sentiments? Consider the following point-by-point examination of each document cited by Hutson as proof of his claim regarding the Founders. First, the importation of Muslim slaves into the colonies offers no support whatsoever to the idea that the Founders were “prepared to make a place” for Islam in the Republic—any more than they sought to accommodate the pagan animism of African slaves or the polytheism

of Native Americans. Hutson admits as much when he concedes that “there is no evidence that the Founders were aware of the religious convictions of their bondsmen.”

Second, the toleration proposed by John Locke in his *A Letter Concerning*



Toleration has, as its context, first and foremost, the toleration that ought to be extended by Christian sects to each other. While he certainly advocates

that the same civil rights be extended to Jews, pagans, and “Mahometans”—he articulates several very clearly defined exceptions. Specifically, in a section dealing with those whom the civil magistrate **cannot** tolerate, he pinpoints:

1. Those whose religious opinions are contrary to “those moral rules which are necessary to the preservation of civil society” (1796, p. 53);
2. The religion that “teaches expressly and openly, that men are not obliged to keep their promise” (p. 54);
3. “[T]hose that will not own and teach the duty of tolerating all men in matters of mere religion...and that they only ask leave to be tolerated by the magistrate so long, until they find themselves strong enough to [seize the government]” (p. 55);
4. All those who see themselves as having allegiance to another civil authority (p. 56). Specifically, Locke gives the example of the Muslim who lives among Christians and would have difficulty submitting to the government of a “Christian nation” when he comes from a Muslim country where the civil magistrate was also the religious authority. Locke notes that such a person would have grave difficulty serving as a soldier in his adopted nation (cf. the 2009 Fort Hood shooting spree by a Muslim soldier who shouted, “Allahu Akbar” as he opened fire, killing 13 and wounding 32; see Stewart, 2010).
5. “[T]hose are not at all to be tolerated who deny the being of a God” (p. 56).

Four of these five exceptions inarguably describe Muslim behavior across the world since the inception of Islam. Indeed, what Hutson fails to divulge is that much of Locke's discussion of religious intolerance (manifested primarily by Catholicism during periods of English history) resembles the very intolerance that typically characterizes Islamic countries around the world.

Hutson further alleges that Thomas Jefferson adopted Locke's view of toleration (which, as just noted, was **not** an endorsement or encouragement of Islam), "in demanding recognition of the religious rights of the 'Mahamdan.'" While it is true that Jefferson championed religious rights for **all** men, he did so with the same reservations and exceptions set forth by Locke. Evidence of his view of Islamic aggression is seen in his revulsion of the Muslim terrorism that characterized the Barbary States leading up to and during his presidency. His "intolerant" response was to send the U.S. Marines against them (Miller, 1997). It is true that, in his autobiography, Jefferson stated that the Virginia *Act for Establishing Religious Freedom* was "meant to comprehend, within the mantle of its protection, the Jew and the Gentile, the Christian and Mahometan, the Hindoo, and infidel of every denomination" (1821, p. 40).



Library of Congress, Manuscript Division

Yet, even that document verifies the clearly **Christian** orientation of the assemblage of Founders who passed it, and the distinction they made between religious toleration versus incorporating non-Christian religion into the fabric of America's civil institutions. The statute begins:

An Act for establishing religious Freedom.

Whereas, **Almighty God** hath created the mind free; That all attempts to influence it by temporal punishments or burthens, or by civil incapacitations tend only to beget habits of hypocrisy and meanness, and therefore are a departure from the plan of **the holy author of our religion**, who **being Lord**, both of body and mind yet chose not to propagate it by coercions on either, as was in **his Almighty power** to do... (Jefferson, 1786, emp. added).

Pray tell, to whom was Jefferson and his colleagues referring when they referred to "the holy author of our religion"? Unquestionably, they were referring to Jesus Christ, the Author of the Christian religion (see Miller, 2008). This statute once again simply underscores the fact that, while the Founders advocated toleration of non-Christian religions, they themselves recognized the reality and priority of the Christian religion and would not have endorsed any statute that would have relegated Christianity to a position of equal validity with other ideologies. They would not have wanted their pronouncements to be misconstrued to promote the inculcation of false religious systems or "infidelity" into the civil institutions of the United States—including all levels of government, our courts, and our schools.

Hutson's citation of Richard Henry Lee as corroboration of pluralism or political correctness is contextually dispelled by the fact that, though opposed to the establishment of a **state** religion, he, along with Patrick Henry, "were advocates of a proposition to make every man contribute something to the support of the Christian religion,



as **the only sure basis of private and public morality**" (Lee, 1825, 1:237, emp. added). The very letter from whence Hutson drew his quotation, written by Lee to James Madison on November 26, 1784, articulates the point that Lee favored citizen support of the Christian religion by means of a tax, noting that religion is "the guardian of morals" (Lee, 1914, 2:304-305; Nelson, 2001, p. 297). Further, throughout his life he avowed belief in the divine origin of the Christian religion and considered its morality to be the necessary foundation of the Republic (Lee, 1914, 1:248).

Appointed by Congress to a committee (along with Samuel Adams and Daniel Roberdeau) to prepare a proclamation to thank God for America's military victories, Lee is believed to be the penman of the proclamation that was issued by the Continental Congress on November 1, 1777. The proclamation requested that God forgive Americans of their sins "through the merits of Jesus Christ" and that He would "prosper the Means of Religion, for the promotion and enlargement of that Kingdom, which consisteth 'in Righteousness, Peace and Joy in the Holy Ghost'" (*Journals of...*, 9:854-851). The quotation within the proclamation is taken from Romans 14:17. This is also the man who, in a letter to Continental Congress president Henry Laurens on October 15, 1779, noted that "our holy religion teaches us

to pray ‘Lead us not into temptation’”—a reference to Christianity and Matthew 6:13 (Lee, 1914, 2:162). Such organic utterances serve to clarify, define, and limit the Founders’ view of liberty and “tolerance.”

Look, once again, at the Virginia Act (p. 33). Extending religious tolerance to non-Christian religions is juxtaposed with “temporal punishments,” “civil incapacitations,” and “coercions.” This fact, again, proves that “religious freedom”—as envisioned by the Founders—referred to **freedom from interference and persecution by human government**. And, again, ironically, Islam’s history verifies its **intolerance** of non-Islamic religions. The only rational conclusion to be drawn from these facts is that the Founders, if they were living today, would see the encroachments of Islam into America as a fundamental and insidious danger to the religious liberty they championed.

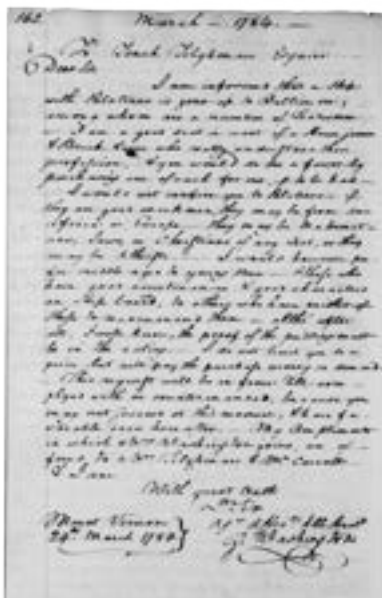
Hutson cites, in which Washington was looking to hire a “House Joiner and Bricklayer” for his estate from a group of Palatine (German) tradesmen, in addition to “Mahometans,” he specifically included “Jews or Christians of any Sect, or they may be Atheists” (Washington, 1784). His inclusion of Jews, Muslims, and atheists proves he did not intend to make a statement about “tolerance” or who are fit citizens in a Republic. A more accurate assessment of Washington’s sentiments in that regard is seen in the General Orders he issued to the Continental Army from Headquarters at Valley Forge on Saturday, May 2, 1778:

While we are zealously performing the duties of good Citizens and soldiers we certainly ought not to be inattentive to the higher duties of Religion. To the distinguished Character of Patriot, **it should be our highest Glory to add the more distinguished Character of Christian** (1778, emp. added).

[to be continued]

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SPEAKING SCHEDULES

Kyle Butt

March 17
March 22-24

Chattanooga, TN (423) 315-3039
Collinsville, IL (618) 667-6708

Eric Lyons

March 1-3
March 18

Loveland, CO (970) 667-3322
Grady, AL (334) 562-9395

Dave Miller

March 1-3
March 9-12
March 27-29

Ft. Stockton, TX (830) 370-9179
Rock Hill, SC (803) 327-7853
Houston, TX (281) 206-8736

Jeff Miller

March 7, 14, 21, 28
March 1, 15

Montgomery, AL (334) 272-8558
Wetumpka, AL (334) 272-8558



NOTE FROM *The Editor*



New A.P. Bible Class Curriculum

“When are you going to produce a Bible class curriculum?” For a period of many years, that question has been posed to Apologetics Press over and over again. It is hard to believe that the desire of so many has now come to fruition. We are pleased to announce the release of the Apologetics Press Bible School Curriculum: *Exploring God’s Word*. It has been developed over a period of many years by highly qualified individuals who have invested countless hours in its production. We think you will find this to be one of the most unique, effective Bible school curricula available anywhere.

What’s more, we are especially excited about the novel format of this curriculum. Several years ago, when the A.P. staff began working on this project, we envisioned producing a “traditional” curriculum that we would print and sell in hardcopy form. As our plans developed, however, we realized that the traditional approach has certain limitations. Changes are only made if the changes are cost effective, and the enhancement process is slow. In addition, under the traditional system, the changes are made from the “top down.” Under our new “open system,” changes are submitted from the “bottom up,” that is, those who actually use the curriculum in the classroom come to recognize what improvements are needed, and may then submit the changes, thereby improving the curriculum as it is being implemented. This approach also allows more creative minds to apply their unique skills, abilities, and ways of thinking to the curriculum so that

Christians everywhere benefit from the suggestions and improvements of others.

This user-friendly, on-line curriculum can be adapted to various congregational demographics—regardless of congregational size, financial ability, etc. Since it is on-line, it can be viewed, downloaded, and printed by anyone with an Internet connection anywhere in the world. What’s more, all the material for two-year-olds through fourth grade is completely free. The only part of the curriculum that is purchased is the printed material for fifth and sixth grades.

Exploring God’s Word has already been used to influence thousands of children all over the world. We believe that we have created the foundation for an outstanding Bible class curriculum. We invite you to visit the site and see what this curriculum can do for your Bible school program. We think you will discover that using this curriculum will be one of the best decisions your congregation can make for your children. To visit the site, simply click on “Bible Class Curriculum” on the left hand column of our main Web site. Additionally, we are providing another curriculum resource free of charge that motivates young people to read their Bibles. At our main Web site, simply click on “Advanced Bible Reader.”

Dave Miller

See the Center Spread
for More Details